

School Programs Commodity Update

What's New in the Food Distribution Program for Schools

Comments Being Accepted on BPR Proposal

The comment period on the Department's Business Process Redesign (BPR) Proposal for improving the Food Distribution Program (FDP) has been extended to April 30, 2000. Although formal comments will be taken until April 30, the Department will accept comments after that date to ensure that all who wanted to could comment.

Take time to read the proposal and respond to the improvements presented. It is posted on the web at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/MENU/fd2000/fd2whnexus.htm>

Let us have your comments by email fdd-pst@fns.usda.gov or fax (703) 305-1410. You may also send your comments to Director, Food Distribution Program, FNS, USDA, Room 510, 3101 Park Center Drive, Alexandria, VA 22302.

Summary of BPR Pilot Projects

The FD 2000 BPR proposal calls for some of the initiatives to be pilot tested and evaluated for effects on recipients,

our school customers, and the producer community. The pilot projects that USDA has approved to date are posted on the web at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/MENU/fd2000/pilots.htm>.

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Computer Connectivity from USDA to States

As part of our FD 2000 BPR effort, USDA will begin development of a computer system that will ultimately allow

States, school districts, and industry to receive and send commodity information from USDA.

The system will allow school districts with the proper computer hardware and software to order quantities and items they need (within the product and quantity limits offered). They will also be able to obtain status of purchases and delivery information from the system whenever they want from USDA. Perhaps of equal importance, school districts will be notified and immediately updated when food safety problems occur.

The new system will allow access to the vast amounts of information that USDA has available on market trends and products. This information should be helpful to school districts in making commercial purchasing decisions. USDA recognizes that not all school districts will have the computer equipment necessary to use the new system. While computer connectivity will be required between USDA and each State, it may be optional between States and school districts. They may use their traditional methods of transmitting and collecting information until the school districts can be connected. The length of time it will take to develop the system is a concern with States. We want you to know that we are making progress with this initiative.

The new system will be developed in partnership with State and school representatives, as well as other partners, and made available to States. School districts and States which choose to implement the new system will have

plenty of lead time to receive training and get accustomed to it.

Date to Remember....

July 16-19, 2000

The American School Food Service Association (ASFSA) will be holding its 54th National Conference in St. Louis, Missouri to celebrate the School Food Service World's Fair.

Email Us Your Feedback on Commodities!

We are interested in receiving your comments and feedback on commodities. Therefore, we have set up a sample form online that you can use as a guide when giving us your comments. It is located at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/MENU/ADMINISTRATION/IMPROVEMENTS/Commodities/capform.htm>

Let us know your students' likes or dislikes. Tell us why you believe the commodity was not acceptable to students.

Let us know the commodities that are the most and least acceptable, and why. Did you encounter a problem when you were preparing the commodity? Would you

like to suggest other healthful commodities that you would like to see the Department offer?

Whatever it is you want to say, we invite you to email your comments to our mailbox at fdd-pst@fns.usda.gov or fax (703) 305-1410.

We welcome comments from participants at the State and/or local level.

**For food safety questions on meat
and poultry products call**

**USDA's
MEAT and POULTRY
HOTLINE**

1-800-535-4555

Online Customer Service

The Department is using the Internet to keep you apprised of the commodities being offered to schools. Some of the things that the Internet has to offer are listed below.

There are fact sheets on the commodities, and the commodity recipe exchange.

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/MENU/ADMINISTRATION/FACTS/facthome.htm>

To find the specifications or the specific requirements that the vendor must follow to meet USDA's contract for producing and delivering our commodities, go to this site.

<http://www.ams.usda.gov/cp/specindex.htm>

You will find a Commercial Item Description of a product here.

<http://www.ams.usda.gov/fqa/cids.htm>

The status of a Commercial Item Description is found at this site

<http://www.ams.usda.gov/fqa/status.htm>

To find out what commodities we have purchased such as meats, poultry, fish, fruit, vegetables, egg products, dry beans, and nuts, look at

<http://www.ams.usda.gov/cp/index.htm>

There is also a Frequently Asked Questions page on the FDD's web site. This page contains answers to common questions about the commodity programs in schools and other outlets along with some tips that we have found useful and presented here as questions. You can find your answer here

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/MENU/FAQ/faqhome.htm>

The purpose of these sites is to enhance the support services we provide to you, our customers. These are just a few of the items that are offered to you as part of our customer support and services.

Food Recovery and Gleaning "Best Practices" Manual Approved

The “Best Practices” manual has been approved. The manual addresses how twelve school districts across the country spent the funds received from USDA to promote gleaning and food recovery efforts in school cafeterias.

This manual provides models that can be used by schools across the country to recover and donate unserved cafeteria food that is otherwise not reused. It also addresses ways that students can get actively involved in the efforts.

The manual is posted on the Food Distribution’s website at

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/MENU/ADMINISTRATION/IMPROVEMENTS/Gleaning/besthome.htm>



Browse New Items on FDP’s Web site

Check out the new items on FDP’s website. Here are the latest items that have been added:

- March 2000 Edition of the School Programs Commodity Update newsletter.
- New recipes to the Commodity Recipes Exchange.
- Commodity Comments Online. This is the place where you can see a sample form online to be used as a guide when you tell us about the

USDA commodities you liked and disliked.

- “Best Practices” Manual for Food Recovery and Gleaning in the National School Lunch Program.

Comments

This is the last School Programs Commodity Update for this school year. Look for our next Commodity Update to come out in August/September 2000. As we are gearing up for School Year 2001, we want to hear from you. Tell us your ideas for enhancing and improving the School Programs Commodity Update. Do you find it interesting? Does it contain information that is useful to you? Also, let us know the kind of articles you would like to see.

If you have any comments on the School Programs Commodity Update or any questions on our products or service, we have an internet address specifically for this purpose: fdd-pst@fns.usda.gov or you can write to Food Distribution Division, Food and Nutrition Service, USDA, 3101 Park Center Drive, Room 520, Alexandria, VA 22302.

Acronym List

ASFSA	American School Food Service Association
BPR	Business Process Redesign
FDD	Food Distribution Division
FDP	Food Distribution Programs
USDA	United States Department of

Agriculture

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conjunction with the School and Institution
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